

**Presidential Transition Support Team  
Records Management Guidance  
2016-2017 Presidential Election**

**Introduction**

The transfer of power from one administration to the next marks a significant moment in U.S. history. The Presidential Transition Act of 1963, as amended, gives the General Services Administration (GSA) a prominent role in this process. It authorizes the Administrator of GSA to provide the President-elect and the Vice-President-elect the services and facilities needed to assume their official duties.

According to the Presidential Transition Act, The Administrator of the General Services Administration designates a senior career GSA official to be the Federal Transition Coordinator (FTC) for the presidential transition. The FTC is to carry out transition-related functions assigned to GSA, to coordinate transition planning across federal agencies to ensure agency compliance with transition-related planning and reporting requirements, and to act as liaison to eligible candidates. Within GSA, the Federal Transition Coordinator heads the Presidential Transition Support Team (PTST) to carry out the majority of GSA's presidential transition responsibilities. The PTST supports the Presidential Transition Team (PTT) which manages the actual transition of the President-elect to the Office of the President. Under the FTC is also the Inaugural Support Team which supports the Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC), charged with supporting all of the necessary efforts involved with the presidential inauguration. Finally, the FTC also supervises a team to support the outgoing President and Vice President. For purposes of this document, "PTST" covers the incoming, outgoing, and inaugural support teams.

The PTST will be responsible for assisting the PTT and PIC in providing a wide range of services in support of the President-elect, including but not limited to:

- office space
- Furniture and furnishings
- IT support
- mail management
- telephones
- equipment and vehicles
- parking
- payroll, financial, human resources, contracting and other appropriate services.

With this great authority granted by the Presidential Transition Act comes a great responsibility to properly manage all the records that will be created. There will be many records that will be created during this 2016-2017 Presidential cycle. The intent of this document is to provide guidance to members of the PTST on the appropriate maintenance, storage, and disposition of official federal records created during the 2016 - 2017 presidential transition.

### **Distinction from PTT and PTST in regards to records**

The activities of the PTT itself will also be creating records. However, a distinction needs to be made regarding the management of direct PTT records vs. PTST records. PTT records are not GSA records, but the PTST records are subject to the Federal Records Act, and this the focus of guidance provided the remainder of this document.

### **Definition of a Record**

In carrying out its mission, the PTST will create, receive and collect thousands of documents including, but not limited to, emails, contracts, letters, and receipts. Much of this information will be federal records and must not be deleted or destroyed. According to 44 U.S.C. § 3301, a federal record is defined as:

“...all recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received by a Federal agency under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the United States Government or because of the informational value of data in them.”

For purposes of this document, the term “recorded information” includes all traditional forms of records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, including information created, manipulated, communicated, or stored in digital or electronic form.

### **Types Of Records (and Non-Records)**

The key to successfully managing records during a presidential transition is the proper organization, categorization, naming and storage of the documents and data generated, received, and collected. During a transition, many activities occur that involve multiple agencies, multiple GSA offices and regions, not-for-profit organizations and private organizations. Understanding what types of records (and non-records) the PTST will typically work with is critical to ensure they are addressed and maintained properly. There are **four categories** of information that the PTST will typically handle. The descriptions below provide some examples to assist with determining with a piece of information is a record or not.

### **PTST Mission Records**

PTST Mission Records are those records that are created, received or collected by the PTST for business purposes directly related to the GSA mission of the PTST. **This type of record does not yet have a disposition authority approved by NARA, thus none of these records should be destroyed. At the end of the PTT process, these records must be collected and stored indefinitely until a disposition has been approved by NARA.**

Records common to the PTST mission include:

- PTST Program Management Records. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Program organization plans

- Task lists
- Employee and contractor assignments
- Correspondence related to program management
- Weekly status reports to management
- Briefings to Management
- PTST Administrative Records. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Supply requests for program staff
  - Seating charts and floor plans
  - Team calendars and meeting arrangements
  - Correspondence related to administrative issues
- PTST Project/Division/Team Records. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Project plans
  - Employees', contractors' and other team members' project assignments
  - Correspondence related to the project/division/team business
  - Weekly project/division/team status reports
  - Briefings created/given to other transition teams, agencies, GSA offices, and others
  - Records of coordinated events with other transition teams, agencies, GSA offices, and others
  - Guidance created and provided, such as Fact Sheets and FAQs

The overwhelming majority of PTST records will be electronic. Where paper records are identified, the best practice is to digitize them and treat them as electronic records as long as digitizing them does not alter their value such as documents signed by important individuals. Ensure all files (both paper and electronic, including emails), and records folders (both paper and electronic) have names meaningful to the teams conducting the work and understandable to non-team members searching through them in the future. When saving files, dates in the file name helps to clearly identify the file. In emails, meaningful subject lines will assist with conducting searches for specific types of information or activities (see Appendix B for an example of a sample records organizational structure). Keep PTST mission records clearly separate from non-PTST mission records in a way that will facilitate easy backup of the PTST records without having to manually delete non-PTST records intermingled with them.

### **Non-PTST Mission GSA Records**

The PTST will encounter and possibly collect many records that are not directly related to the PTST mission. These can be records from other GSA functions that are utilized by the PTST, but are not acted upon by the PTST. They may also be just reference material (see below). These records will likely not need to be kept by the PTST, except possibly as reference documents.

Common Non-PTST records include, but are not limited to:

- Accounting, financial and payroll information
- Employment and human resources information
- GSA business as usual outside of the PTST

- Property and space management
- Technology acquisition and set up
- Furniture requests and delivery/setup
- Travel
- Security and HSPD-12
- Contracts, MOUs, IAAs other than those directly engaged with the PTST
- Records related to the transition of the GSA Administrator and other Internal GSA political appointees (these records must be stored and maintained by the component of GSA responsible for those transition activities)

For GSA records that may be referenced or utilized by the PTST but are not related to the PTST mission, the component of GSA responsible for that record is to retain the records for the required duration and to dispose of those records when required by the GSA Records Schedule or the NARA General Records Schedule.

### **PTST Reference Materials**

Reference materials are materials used by the PTST to supply information and project history to make informed decisions. They are generally not considered a federal record and should not be stored with PTST mission records. However, if PTST reference materials are directly cited in decisions, interagency agreements, contracts or memorandums of understanding, they **may** need to be copied as an official record and treated the same as other PTST records.

Common PTST Reference Materials include, but are not limited to:

- Documents from prior presidential transitions – i.e., reports and MOUs
- Prior legal/OGC decisions and guidance
- Transition guidance by other agencies, i.e., OPM
- Private Sector/Non Profit Organizations' guidance
- Copies of official records of the current transition for reference
- Media clippings
- Previously given briefings
- Interagency agreements, contracts, memorandums of understanding to the extent that they are **not** directly with the PTST and are needed for reference.

PTST reference materials not considered records may be disposed of at any time. Follow proper security rules for disposing of materials that may contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or other types of sensitive information.

### **Other Non-Records**

Any material created, received or collected that is not related to agency business or does not meet the legal definition of a record is **not** a record.

Common types of non-record materials include, but are not limited to:

- Personal papers and communications having nothing to do with agency business

- Library materials
- Information copies of correspondence, directives, forms, and other documents on which no administrative action is recorded or action taken
- Catalogs, trade journals, and other publications that are received from other Government agencies, commercial firms, or private institutions and that require no action and are not part of a case on which action is taken
- Routing slips and transmittal sheets adding no information to that contained in the transmittal material
- Physical exhibits, artifacts, and other material objects lacking evidential value
- Copies of records that are already properly stored.

These types of materials not considered records may be disposed of at any time. Follow proper security rules for disposing of materials that may contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or other types of sensitive information. The PTST Records Management Coordinators (RMC) and the Agency Records Officer (ARO) can help determine when the records can be destroyed.

### **Outgoing Appointees**

Outgoing personnel (political appointees, etc) must be sure to organize their records for proper storage, retrieval and preservation. NARA guidance regarding the proper procedures for addressing records for outgoing appointees can be found at the following link:

<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/publications/documenting-your-public-service.html>. In addition, within each GSA service and staff office there is a Records Management Coordinator (RMC) who can provide additional guidance given the particular types of records appointees may typically work with. In addition, the Agency Records Officer (ARO) may assist in determining the disposition of records.

## **Appendix A**

### **Additional Resources**

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) guidance reminds heads of Federal agencies that official records must remain in the custody of the agency. Federal officials should be aware that there are criminal penalties for the unlawful removal or destruction of Federal records [18 U.S.C. 2071] and the unlawful disclosure of national security information [18 U.S.C. 793, 794, and 798]. Departing Federal officials should contact GSA's Agency Records Officer, Robert Smudde ([robert.smudde@gsa.gov](mailto:robert.smudde@gsa.gov)), if they have questions about maintaining and disposing records and extra copies of records.

Additional sources of information include:

GSA's Records Management Policy, OAS P 1820.1:  
<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/directive/d0/content/629686>

NARA Guidance for public officials entering and leaving public service:  
<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/publications/documenting-your-public-service.html>

NARA Guidance regarding Agency Recordkeeping Requirements:  
<https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/policy/agency-recordkeeping-requirements.html>

## Appendix B

Sample layout for transition records:

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